

TROUTVILLE Tidbits



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Happy New Year

Let It Go, For Grudges Leave Smudges!

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"But when you are praying, first forgive anyone you are holding a grudge against, so that your Father in heaven will forgive your sins, too (Mark 11:25 NLT)." "Never seek revenge or bear a grudge against anyone, but love your neighbor as yourself. I am the LORD (Lev. 19:18 NLT)."

A sincere and devout woman spoke to a small group in a prayer circle. She described her need as follows: "I find in my heart an unforgiving spirit toward one who has brought great harm to a member of my family. I bear a grudge against this person, and I have found this grudge to be a barrier when I try to approach God in prayer. Please pray for me." It is possible that a grudge you bear toward someone will hinder you from entering prayer where you can have a transforming experience with God. One of these barriers that all of us have to deal with is the matter of holding a grudge.

Holding a grudge is defined as "a feeling of resentment or ill will, especially one lasting a long time." Hanging on to grudges is like holding on to a complaint and walking around with a chip on your shoulder. The result is bitterness that can literally eat you from the inside out. Bearing a grudge can cause a person to be consumed with ill feelings, hostility, and antipathy.

Have you ever gotten a spot your shirt or blouse? Have you ever tried to clean it and you keep working at it, but it gets worse and it begins to smear everywhere. As long as you keep working at it, it only gets worse! It is similar to holding on to a grudge. As you keep working it and working it, the grudge begins to smear your life.

Keeping a record of sins (or holding a grudge) is like building a wall between you and another person, and it is nearly impossible to talk openly while the wall is there. God doesn't keep a record of our sins (Psalm 130:3); when He forgives, He forgives completely, tearing down any wall between us and Him. Thus, when you pray, realize that God is holding nothing against you. His lines of communication are completely open. It is also true that God expects that we deal with others in a similar way; that we hold nothing against and harbor no grudges against another whom He has created and loves.

One of the things that we must realize in life is that **injury by others is inevitable**. *People are natural mistake makers. People naturally do things that are wrong. We must remember that we are seldom mistreated deliberately. We must also realize that occasionally we are injured by others unconsciously. In other words, they may not even know that they have hurt us.*

The big question that we must ask ourselves is, **"How do I react to injury?"** *Do you give expression to your hostility on the spot with remarks that are inappropriate? Do you follow the policy of doing unto others as they have done unto you? (The opposite of the Golden Rule – "Do for others what you would like them to do for you." - Matt. 7:12 NLT). Also, do you list your grudges in a little black book so that when an occasion arises you can pay back the injury with interest? If these are your reactions, then you are acting in a manner that is wrong and unreflective of a life devoted to God. (Paul tells us that if we are filled with God's love, then we will keep no record of when we have been wronged - 1 Cor. 13:5).*

God instructs us to exhibit **"unlimited forgiveness"** (Matt. 18:21-22). Peter's offer to forgive as many as seven times was thought to be the height of generosity. The disciples were shocked when Jesus instructed them to forgive until seventy times seven. His primary motive behind this requirement of unlimited forgiveness was for the spiritual well-being of the offended. Jesus was fully aware that the carrying of a grudge and the refusal to forgive would eat like an acid and fester like an infection in the soul.

Do you find it easy to hold a grudge and difficult to forgive? The basis for our letting go and forgiving others is found in God's forgiveness of us (Col. 3:12-23). The God who forgives is able to give you the grace to forgive others. Therefore, ask God to help you to let go of grudges and be willing to forgive those who have hurt you and committed a wrong against you.

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